Empowering a new generation of Australians through the New Colombo Plan: Curriculum-specific learning in the Indo-Pacific

Associate Professor Ly Tran,
Australian Research Council Future Fellow
Deakin University, Australia

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Outline

- Overview
- Research
- Curriculum specific learning
- Implications for practice
Overview

- Pilot in 2004
- By 2016: around 10,000
- By 2018, will have reached over 31,000
- Target: 40,000 by 2020
- 40 locations in the Indo-Pacific

(Australian Government 2017, 2018)

- Australian undergraduate participation rate: 20.9% in 2016, compared to US 15.5% and UK 7.2% in 2015-16

(Australian Universities International Directors’ Forum, 2017; Go International, 2018; Open Doors, 2017)
Pilot study with two Universities: Victoria and South Australia

Two rounds of interviews with students: pre-departure and post-return interviews

Interviews with academics, mobility staff and policy makers

Total: 52 interviews

a critical discourse analysis of national and international programs and policy settings (Gribble & Tran, 2016)
1. Policy and program analysis

2. Longitudinal study with NCP STEM students: 4 stages

3. Interviews with:
   a. home academics and mobility/study-abroad staff
   b. host academics, mobility coordinators, students, policy makers
   c. Policy makers and third party providers

4. Quantitative strand: 2 surveys
Curriculum-specific learning

- Comparative transnational perspective of disciplinary knowledge
- Coherence between the course contents and the NCP program
- Diversifying learning platforms to facilitate engagement and theory-practice integration
- Providing learning conditions that would not have been available otherwise
- Continuing learning beyond the NCP mobility experience
I definitely have a deeper understanding of the health issues faced in other countries and the comparison to an Australian setting (Public Health, mobility to India).

Definitely the fact that you are presented with all these opportunities you would never come across otherwise… as a student… they allow you to experience and see different things.
And also for the course that we go and do for two weeks in Korea … Our final examination is actually just held during the University Semester 2 examination period… There is the inconvenience, we’re doing the course in July and then we are getting examined in November so we are just going to make sure that we don’t slack off and forget everything that we’ve learnt…
I was given more of an opportunity to take the class. On my second day they said you’re in charge now, you plan everything. So in Australia you don’t really get that, so I was more like a real teacher when I was over there and I got to plan sequences, I got to plan everything…

(Primary Education, 3-week teaching round in Malaysia)
But even then I felt that there could be more, because maybe just doing one presentation, you know, wasn’t quite enough compared to what the students actually learned overseas (NCP student).

Maybe if there is a venue for those students to share their learning with broader student population, that might be a good way (Academics)
Learning from mobility experience does not just happen during the mobility experience only.

To maximise the potential and ongoing curriculum-specific learning, then active and continuing learning beyond the mobility experience needs to be nurtured.

Rodgers (2002, p. 847), continuity is a critical element of an education experience, without which ‘learning is random and disconnected’.

Building on learning abroad
Recognising returnees as a valuable potential resource for internationalisation at home

- Providing students with structured opportunities for reflection, evaluation (Dunkley, 2009; Forsey et al., 2012; Richardson & Munday, 2013) and continued learning and sharing (Tran & Vu, 2018).

- Creating a variety of purposeful channels and activities for students to share and extend their international experiences and learning abroad.

- Creating online space/database where students can share video clips/blogs about what they learnt abroad, especially what they cannot learn just within the classroom wall.

- Recognizing the role of students (and academics & mobility coordinators):
  - potential actors/partners in internationalisation at home rather than mere visitors or alumni.
Collective learning

- Focus on the learning community, with which returnees engage, rather than returnees only

- Collective transformative learning is integral in building a fully embedded mobility program to enhance internationalisation at home

- Engagement for the collective (Tran & Vu, 2018)

- Learning collectively through study tour and group internships via NCP as currently is valued but equal attention and investment is needed to nurture and sustain collective learning upon re-entry with peers who travelled and importantly who do not travel.

- Integrated rather than stand-alone re-entry programs.
Implications for Practice

- **Coherence and continuity** in curriculum-specific learning and **collective** learning
- Better connections and collaborations:
  - Among academics across different units/courses
  - Previous mobile students and academics
  - Home and host academics
  - Academics and mobility offices
  - Academics and academic development staff in charge of internationalisation
- Situated professional learning for staff to guide continued learning across pre-departure, in-country and re-entry
- Good practices recognised and shared at a **systemic** level rather than ad-hoc
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONNECT:</th>
<th>How are the ideas and information CONNECTED to what you already knew?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EXTEND:</td>
<td>What new ideas did you get that EXTENDED or pushed your thinking in new directions?</td>
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<tr>
<td>ACTIVATE</td>
<td>What has your institution done to ACTIVATE learning abroad for internationalisation at home?</td>
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Deepest thanks to the students and staff who participated in this research